

7-2  
**INTEGRITY**

**25¢ a Copy**



# INTEGRITY

## HEROISM



NOVEMBER, '52

# C O N T E N T S

EDITORIAL - - - - -	1
THE CONFIRMED HERO	
By ED WILLOCK - - - - -	2
HEROISM VERSUS MEDIOCRITY	
By JAMES M. EGAN, O.P. - - - - -	10
EXCELSA FIDELITAS	
By MONSIGNOR GERHARD A. FITTKAU - - - - -	19
SAINT THERESE AND HEROISM	
By DOROTHY DOHEN - - - - -	26
NICE GUY (Poem)	
By BARBARA L. SAMSON - - - - -	35
HEROISM AND THE CONSCRIPTED CONSCIENCE	
By JEREM O'SULLIVAN-BARRA - - - - -	36
BOOK REVIEWS - - - - -	45

INTEGRITY is published by lay Catholics and  
dedicated to the task of discovering the new  
synthesis of RELIGION and LIFE for our times.

**Vol. 7, No. 2**

**November 1952**

Published monthly by Integrity Publishing Co., Inc., 157 East 38th Street,  
New York 16, N. Y., MU-5-8125. Edited by Dorothy Dohen.

Re-entered as Second Class Matter May 11, 1950 at the

Post Office in New York, N. Y. under the Act

of March 3, 1879. All single copies 25¢

each; yearly subscriptions: Domestic

\$3.00, Canadian \$3.50,

Foreign \$4.00.

INTEGRITY is indexed in *THE CATHOLIC PERIODICAL INDEX*

## EDITORIAL



DAY after day the newspapers tell us of heroes who are suffering tortures and agonies to keep their faith in Christ. We read of Bishop Ford's death in prison and we thank God Who continues to raise up martyrs and saints. We see pictures of those who in incredible ways have escaped their tormentors and are free to tell us what it means to be persecuted for the faith.

They remind us that the words of Saint Paul are still applicable, concerning those "who by faith conquered kingdoms, wrought justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, recovered strength from weakness, became valiant in battle, put to flight the armies of foreigners. Women received their dead raised to life again. But others were racked, not accepting deliverance, that they might find a better resurrection. And others had trial of mockeries and stripes, moreover also of bands and prisons. They were stoned, they were cut asunder, they were tempted, they were put to death by the sword, they wandered about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being in want, distressed, afflicted: of whom the world was not worthy."

Indeed the world is not worthy of such heroes, but the Church rejoices that God gives them to her. And while we pray for our persecuted brothers and confirm our faith with their faith, we are mindful that we too are called to "take up our cross daily." It is all very well to console ourselves that great trial necessarily calls forth heroic action (and it is true that God does come to our help according to the measure of our need). But while there were Christians who rose to heights of holiness in concentration camps there were those who sold their souls for a cigarette. Stunted souls seldom rise to great occasions. An habitually heroic life is the best preparation for heroic dying.

\* \* \*

We are grateful to those readers who responded generously to our October editorial with gift subscriptions and names for publicity. May we suggest giving *Integrity* for Christmas!

THE EDITOR



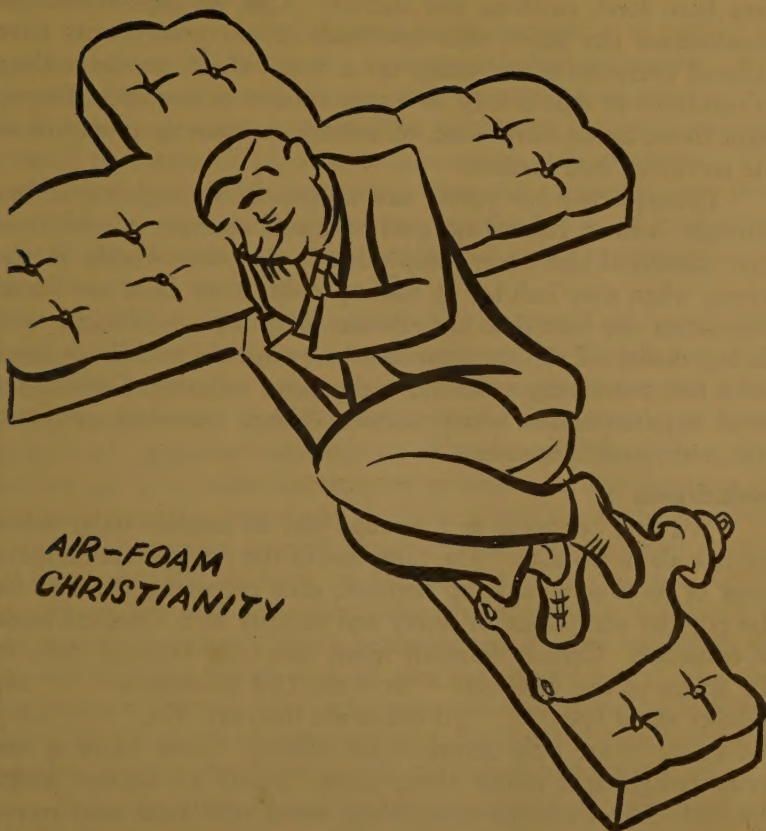
# The Confirmed Hero

**W**HILE we make fun of heroism, we Americans as a people are incorrigible hero-worshippers. Ed Willock discusses this peculiarity.

**Ed Willock:** I can think of nothing that so pointedly indicates the need for a revival of risk and adventure in modern living than the thing we pedantically refer to as juvenile delinquency. We should be more honest and more accurate to call it youthful frustration. If it were true that there was no apparent reason for frustration, then we could treat the malady as something vicious and personal. If modern living offered every adventurous opportunity that a youthful heart desires, then hot-rod escapades, armed assault, dope addiction and the like, are evidence of a kind of mass-mania quite beyond explaining.

This is not the case. If we were more sympathetic with our teen-agers, we should see through their more innocent eyes the most alarming weakness in modern society. It would be as apparent to us as it is to them that an era of Ease, Comfort and Protection (industrial society's sole reason for being) is at the same time infernally dull. To have capitulated to such bovine temptations as these is a sign of a great sickness, a sickness which our teen-agers wisely prefer not to contract. It is the mark of our social degradation if the only two alternatives presented to our youth for daring-do are hot-rods and air-foam mattresses. The young man who prefers to drive madly through the night in a souped-up heap rather than be a nice boy and make lots of money at a "respectable" job has alas (we should admit it) chosen the better part.

The thing about Catholicism that has always had a great appeal to youth is the breathtaking disregard it has for worldly standards. In the midst of men who stand clinging to their possessions, jealous of their lusts, fearful for their carcasses, the Christian walks cheerfully, freely, and defiantly. Is this the tradition that we have permitted to shine through our lives? Is it the Catholic father who tells his son: "Use your talents for Christ; you won't make much money and people will laugh at your idealism, but you will find adventure in a great cause!" Or is it more likely that he will drag in religion on a string in order to bolster



a purely worldly set of standards: "You have a moral obligation to make a good living. Catholicism doesn't expect heroism!"

### **no risk, no daring**

The Catholic parent or teacher may know every possible argument to justify astute ambition, ambiguous diplomacy. He may know twenty arguments against the rashness of "working for nothing," "starry-eyed idealism," having a lot of kids, mixing religion with politics, dirty poverty, yet in winning the argument he will be unable to eradicate the suspicion from his son's mind that he and his ilk have sold Christianity down the river in exchange for protection, pills, and pensions. Only a very sick mind could fall for the modern "bargain" by which one gives up all idealism, Christian or human, for the sake of preserving one's safety, one's income, one's social standing. Are our children rabbits that we should expect them to desire nothing more sub-

lime than food, clothing and shelter? Can we expect them to countenance our deceit that thousands of our predecessors have suffered persecution and death for a faith which we are willing to constrain so that it may fit into a scheme of avarice? Do we want them, as we have done, to become deceptively proficient in the service of two masters?

Granted that our youth, not necessarily through virtue but through instinct, rejects the goal of foetal security to which we have dedicated our every daily talent. Are they wholly in the wrong when they indulge in madcap risks, if we have not borne witness to the fact that Catholicism is a militant, difficult and daring denial of all the conventions by which worldlings live? Let's ask ourselves pointedly, right now, whether Catholicism *lived* requires action which current criteria considers idealistic, rash, risky and "imprudent"?

### **melodrama**

We find ourselves in a strange sort of muddle today when we talk about heroism. The literature of the last generation spent most of its time debunking heroism, thus preparing the way for the popular acceptance of safety and security as a dignified mode of existence. Certain dramatic terms that once brought chills to the spines of our forebears—"Save the Old Homestead". . . "My Mother was a Lady!". . . "I'd rather die than say 'Yes' ". . . "Keep the Faith!"—are now occasions for hilarity. How naive to our more enlightened minds these corny heroics of ancient melodramas! Yet Catholics must blush when they hear read moral directives which are just as "corny" currently being preached from our pulpits. "Keep the faith!" may be a jocular remark exchanged between bar-flies as they stagger home to bed, but it is still the admonition Saint Paul addressed to his persecuted brethren.

It should be easy for thousands of Catholics to recall the catechism definition of Confirmation which states that this Sacrament gives us the grace and the responsibility "to profess our faith and rather die than deny it." Is this corn or is it the thing Catholic men live by? We can't have it both ways. This secular propaganda against heroic decision ridicules every Christian virtue; the honest man is called a "sucker," the chaste girl is called a "prude," the generous mother of children is called a "breeder," the man who wants to earn a living by hard work rather than become a con-man is a "nature boy," the person anxious to give his life for anything other than money is a "fool" or a "romantic." In my experiences these scathing names are just as likely to come from Catholics as from anyone else.



## hero-worshippers all

On the other hand, contradictorily enough, as a people we are manufacturing heroes at a rate never before attempted. Any person so innocent as to believe what he reads, after scanning the daily sport-page must conclude that yesterday's Dodger game out-ri-valed the battle of Lepanto in gore, glory and gumption. The public is encouraged to gripe every time the men who mine their coal ask for another dime-per-hour, yet the heroes of Hollywood and Yankee Stadium are showered with a king's ransom to spend as affluently as they please.

Ever since the Reformation the incidence of immortality among humans has been on the increase. The Church canonizes some few dead saints every year; the daily press canonizes a few living heroes every day. This adulation of ball-chasers, groaners, hams and "geniuses" educates us to the erroneous opinion that heroes are of a more-than-human species. Secular heroism revolves around the sensational, the bizarre, and the anarchic. These comic-strip attitudes toward heroes and heroism seriously contradict notions that are basic to Christianity. For example, Christianity teaches that a perfectability has been made attainable to *all men* as a result of Christ's becoming our Brother and dying for us, and it teaches further that *all men* are obliged to strive for this perfection. The only hero is the saint. Even here our half-secular, half-Catholic minds become confused. Suddenly the saint becomes another Frankie who takes to religion instead of to crooning!

It is only after a great deal of thoughtful effort that certain distinctions become clear. The kind of heroism demanded by Christianity is universal (attainable by every man) and contemporary (common to every age). Secular heroism is not divine election but human adulation, and thus marked for a special few and marked by a shifting of standards. Saint Paul is a contemporary and universal figure, whereas yesterday's secular hero is tomorrow's stumble-bum.

If we confuse Christian heroism with secular heroism, we endow sainthood with certain romantic, exotic and bizarre features as an excuse for feeling no urge to let its appeal disrupt the bourgeois tenor of our own affairs. Yet the heroics of sanctity deal with commonplace things. Christ, Our Hero and Our Lord (leader), exemplified heroism in regard to commonplace matters. He suffered indigence, ingratitude, suffering and death. These, though somewhat less in intensity, are the common lot of every man. Sainly heroics are seldom a matter of going into the ring with Joe Louis, standing before a firing squad, hitting a home

run at the Polo Grounds, carrying a serum into the infected wilds of Tibet. Usually sanctity deals with child-bearing, earning an honest living, suffering pain, bearing ingratitude—all of them as common to one side of the globe as to the other.

### **refusing common sanctity**

Yet how appropriate is this lesson to the modern world! Are not the universal refusals of difficulties in our day primarily refusals to bear children, to work honestly, to suffer pain, to risk ingratitude? The common man is refusing the common sanctity of Christianity. He is implying that heroism is the romantic behavior of special people—using this as an excuse for supineness, timidity and luxury in his own affairs.

A fastidious avoidance of risk and discomfort is a kind of childishness; the child is accustomed to other people shouldering risks and discomforts for him. It is highly significant that during these days when a childish flight from difficulties has become epidemic among adults, the Christian Sacrament precisely created to stimulate maturity is looked upon as a silly little ceremony of beribboned cuteness. The Sacrament designed to make us mature soldiers of Christ, giving us the determination and confidence to bear an adult burden, has all the appearances of grown-up mammas playing with their little dolls. The sign remains but its significance is generally forgotten.

### **the confirmed Christian**

Confirmation, Christian adulthood, is the root from which the dual shoots of Matrimony and Holy Orders grow. A serious consciousness of adult vocation depends upon a wholehearted co-operation with the graces of Confirmation. If one could not see the results, one would still expect that an ignorance of Confirmation would be followed by a refusal to take adult responsibility as an apostolic Catholic.

I shall not attempt here to go into any exhaustive treatment of this great Sacrament, but I should like to deal with a few self-evident truths which follow from its simple catechism definition. The traditional analogy is that of being enlisted in an army. The pat on the cheek administered by the bishop is the imparting of a divine commission. This road of Christian maturity is difficult, we are assured, but we travel it, not alone, but in a great company.

### **the lone sentry**

One of its several effects is to urge us to confirm one another in the faith. How scandalous it is if any confirmed Catholic is left to suffer alone! Where is the grand army of which he is part? Yet this loneliness has become far too typical. If a workman



urged on by the virtue of justice attempts to organize a union among his fellows, is he likely to find himself surrounded by other confirmed Catholics who will see him through the trials that accompany such determination? Hardly! More than likely he is cautioned, "Take care of number one . . . Don't stick your neck out . . . Feather your own nest." When the mother of many children finds herself in a maternity ward, happy with her new baby and anxious to get home to the others, do other confirmed Catholic people surround her rejoicing in her triumph, encouraging her to face the new hardships? Hardly! More than likely if she is noticed at all it is to impart some warning, "How awful! Six children! You poor thing . . . Don't you think you've done your share?"

If a young girl decides to attach herself to some Catholic activity which requires a lot of work and little reward, do her Catholic friends jump in and say, "It's a grand thing you're doing, stay with it." Hardly! She hears instead, "You're throwing your life away! You'll get no thanks . . . After all, what's in it for you!"

That's the way the story usually goes. Not only is the intrepid soul who follows his conscience against convention left to himself, but he is actually discouraged by those who claim to be in the same army as he! It is no wonder at all that widely scattered Catholics from all walks of life write to each other like so many intimates even though they may never have met, simply because they see in one another buddies in the same confirmed army. But these are the few. Where will you find a neighborhood so animated with Christian convictions? Why must the brethren be scattered?

When the early martyrs stepped into the dreadful arena they did not see a group of their fellow Christians sitting in the front row, but they would today. Catholic living has become doubly difficult because it is attended by such utter loneliness. This could be excused if the typical interpretation by the zealous ones was to parade in sackcloth and ashes, or set up hermitages in the North woods. No, such simple things as having a fourth or fifth baby, or speaking out against flagrant injustice—in other words, just avoiding sin—is now regarded as rashness. Timidity, luxury and barrenness have not grown spontaneously among our Catholic people; they have encouraged one another in it.

It has been my personal good fortune to encounter circumstances other than those I am describing here. My great blessing has been to have my faith constantly re-confirmed by the admirable

actions of Catholic associates. Thus, when I make the above charges I do so without rancor, but insist that the laxity of most Catholics in this regard is common knowledge.

### **fruit of the community**

It is time we admitted that there are far more enemies of Christianity in the world than atheistic communism. It should not come as a surprise to us that individualism (one of our household gods) *is no less an enemy*. The inference that nobility of character occurs among humans with the same unpredictable individuation as epilepsy or double-jointedness is a subtle attack against the Catholic community—its very reason for existence is to create a spiritual climate in which human perfections become commonplace. The responsibility to be virtuous is a *shared* responsibility. Although an individual may from time to time grow in perfection *in spite of* the viciousness or weakness of his intimate associates, this should not be the rule. In the majority of cases in which Christian heroism is practiced, it comes not so much as a consequence of one man pitting himself against the world but as a result of a well-defined community effort. The Christian hero is not a flash of glory, fire worked against nocturnal void; he is but one fruit upon a vast tree, a tree planted, pruned and enlivened for the sole purpose of generating heroic fruit. The Mass, the parish, the common effort of religious, virgins, and parents is a divinely organized attack upon fallen human nature. The heroic cancer patient manifests a greatness which is fruit of the combined efforts of her priest and brethren acting as a Body under the Headship of Christ. The same is true of the over-burdened parent, the honest workman, and all our other confirmed heroes.

The Protestant concept of holiness—a direct pipeline from individual to God unmodified by any mediatorship of Christ, Pope, priest or community of saints—has lent credence to the secular notion of individualistic, self-generating heroism. In this false light human greatness appears to be an uncaused cause, rather than what it is—the expected effect of a divine-human organization designed to produce such results. When a Catholic acts in a fashion that appears to be heroic more often than not he does so from the conviction that to do less would constitute a betrayal of the faith. Likewise, when a Catholic fails to respond to what in his conscience appears to be an obligation on the premise that “Christianity does not require heroism,” he is not merely refusing the invitation to be a hero, he is betraying the faith. Too many people reject poverty, insecurity, sacrifice, loneliness and hard work as though these were special duties for heroic volunteers,



neglecting the obvious fact that in particular instances the only alternative to these difficulties may be sin. For example, all the propaganda today in defense of non-conception of children is seldom an argument for heroic continence but a defense of sin. Yet the birth-controllors put up a common front with those who plead for continence and come up with a remarkable combination of the two called "Rhythm"! Another example is that of the wage-earner who hides behind his family as a reason for not sticking his neck out against a social injustice. Although many families may be ruined due to his unwillingness to face a difficult obligation, he excuses this on the basis that he is a God-fearing family man.

### the result of timidity

Confirmation, then, a part of Christian living, makes every Catholic a special kind of hero and member of an heroic Body. If Catholics adopt the mentality of their times, they will excuse themselves from taking their share of the heroic burden preferring to look upon the few who accept the burden as *special* people. Thus it appears as though "apostolic" Catholics are the queer ones who prefer to be queer, and that those who are timid and cautious in keeping with the secular mores are normal. The net result is to rob the zealous Catholic of the community support he has every reason to expect, and to place him in a position where to perform the simple duties of his state requires an heroic effort.

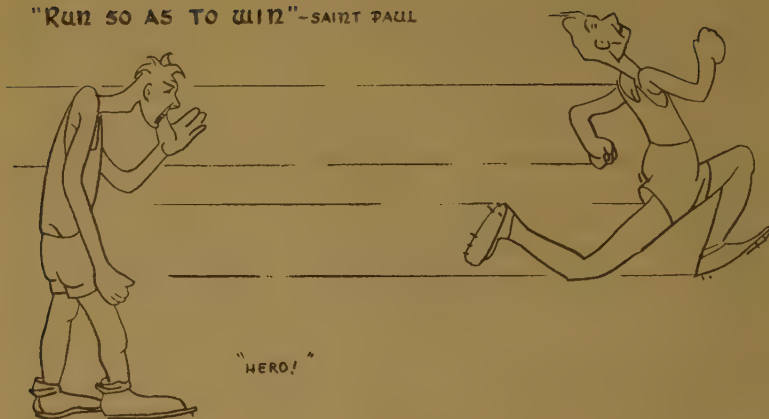
---

“**T**HE daily round, always the same, with the same weaknesses, the same troubles, might well be called ‘the terrible daily round.’ What fortitude, then, is needed to resist this terrible, crushing, monotonous, suffocating daily round! We need uncommon virtue to carry out with uncommon fidelity . . . with attention, piety and deep fervor, that mass of common things which fills our daily lives. Holy Church shows herself at her most just and most wise as a teacher of holiness when she exalts these humble lights, so often ignored by those who have been favored by seeing them shining before their very eyes. Extraordinary deeds, important events, great enterprises need only to be seen to awaken the highest instincts in all; but the commonplace, the ordinary, the daily round with no relief and no splendor about it, has no power to excite or to fascinate. And yet it is this which makes up the lives of most people. . . . How often do extraordinary circumstances arise in the course of a lifetime? They are rare indeed, and woe to us if sanctity were restricted to extraordinary circumstances! What then would the majority of men do? For we must declare the truth: to all without exception comes the call to sanctity!”

—Pius XI



"Run SO AS TO WIN"—SAINT PAUL



## Heroism versus Mediocrity

**T**HE following article may surprise those of us who console ourselves that we are not all called to heroism. Father Egan, formerly of the Angelicum in Rome, now teaches theology at Saint Mary's College in Michigan.

**James M. Egan, O.P.:** A familiar Gospel incident may serve as an introduction to the series of reflections we should like to make on the question of *heroism* versus *mediocrity*. It is an incident we refer to very frequently, yet rarely is it placed for us in its full context. All the Synoptics recall the incident (with slight variations in detail) and all place it in exactly the same context. It is the incident of the rich young man who wanted to save his soul and asked the Master for advice.

The rich young man had witnessed from the sidelines the wonderful goodness of the Master to little children. Perhaps the words: "Indeed, I tell you, whoever does not accept the kingdom of God as a little child shall by no means enter it," had aroused the conscience of the young man and impelled him to inquire whether he was doing all that was necessary for his salvation. At any rate, as Our Lord started to leave the place where He had blessed the little ones, the young man "ran up to Him, and kneeling before Him asked Him, 'Good Master! what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?'" Our Lord first of all indicated that the only true measure of goodness is God Himself and then suggested an

examination of conscience on the commandments, confining Himself to those that deal with one's neighbor, perhaps because they would be the ones that a rich man might fail more easily in. But the young man's conscience was clear: "Master, all these I have observed from my boyhood." Such simple honesty pleases the Master, for "looking at him, He loved him." He sees that the young man wants something more than just fulfilling his ordinary duties and so He invites him to go higher: "One thing thou lackest. Go sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt possess treasure in heaven, and come, follow me!" This is the way Saint Mark and Saint Luke report the words of Christ; Saint Matthew has Him also say: "If thou wouldst be perfect, go sell . . ." We know how the young man reacted to this invitation: "But he became crestfallen at the counsel, and went away grieved; for he was the possessor of much wealth."

What is the meaning of this scene? Did the young man do wrong in rejecting the invitation of the Master? There are those who will simply deny this, for, they say, no one is obliged to the counsels; it is sufficient to fulfil the commandments to be saved. Certainly that is what Our Lord Himself said; yet is that all that He implied? Is the grief of the young man merely regret that circumstances prevent him from accepting an invitation he'd like to accept otherwise? While we cannot conclude anything too definite from the attitude of the young man, we must consider what followed this incident. For not only was the young man grieved, but it seems that Our Lord Himself took a serious view of his reaction.

### **the needle's eye**

"And Jesus, looking round, said to His disciples, 'How difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!'" This statement "amazed" the disciples who heard it; it was apparently something they had not thought of before; perhaps they too had the difficulty about commandments being enough. But Jesus, as He did with other statements that surprised His hearers, repeats it with greater emphasis: "Children, how difficult it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to pass through the needle's eye than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God!" This only increased the astonishment of the hearers; they had no doubt of the meaning of the Master's words, but they were disturbed about their consequences and expressed their disturbance, not to the Master, but to each other. But note the question they ask: "Then, who can be saved?" They know that they had followed the invitation of the Master to give up all things,

but did every man have to do the same thing in order to be saved? They foresaw difficulties if this severe doctrine was the truth. Yet the Master did not retract, but gave them assurance that what is impossible for men is possible to God: "For all things are possible with God."

Reflection on this episode from the Gospels should at least make us realize that saving our souls is not quite the simple process that it is sometimes thought to be. Our Lord did not show Himself indifferent to the reaction of the young man to His invitation to perfection. Does it follow then that all men must practise the counsels in order to be saved? Do we not know, on Our Lord's authority, that he who simply keeps the commandments will be saved? Did the Apostles finally understand what the Master was trying to tell them?

Certainly they did and their teaching became, with some few exceptions, the directive for all Christian souls down the centuries. As we shall see shortly, it is clearly expressed by Saint Thomas, but first we should like to point out that there are indications that this teaching is not so clearly understood today. "Indications," we say, for that is all they are, rarely formal statements that could be exposed as erroneous. And, as usual, they tend to opposite extremes.

### **the minimists and their opponents**

There is, first of all, a considerable group that might be called the minimists; they are recognizable by several of their clichés. After all, they'll tell you, we are fortunate to get people to keep the commandments, much less urge them to do more. Anyone who keeps the commandments is in the state of grace and that is all that is needed for salvation. Another pet statement is that no one is obliged to heroic virtue. They also are fond of accusing anyone who urges Catholics to greater generosity of emphasizing the counsels and neglecting the commandments, as though these necessarily went together. In general, we may say that they are satisfied with the minimum when it comes to fulfilling the great commandments of the Lord.

On the other hand, there is a group that rebels against the mediocrity which the above mentality has obviously produced within the life of the Church. They wish to arouse men from their lethargy and impress upon them the duty of striving for greater holiness. They are not satisfied to do this according to the traditional ways, but tend to exaggerate the obligation, going so far as to say or insinuate that a man could keep the commandments all his life and still lose his soul.



## the whole truth

Since no position can be entirely erroneous, we must admit that there is some truth in these opposed attitudes we have just explained.

Thus for example it is absolutely true that he who fulfils all the comandments is in the state of grace and hence on the road to salvation. There is a minimum that must be fulfilled in order to satisfy the commands of chariy and if it is fulfilled the individual will be saved. Does this mean that the individual can aim at the minimum only? Of course not, as we shall see.

It is also true that the counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience do not oblige all Christians, especially when it is a question of actually giving up all one's possessions, sacrificing all legitimate sex satisfaction, and living under the will of a superior, who does not exercise natural authority over us. But does that mean that the Christian is not obliged to develop the spirit of the counsels? Of course not.

It is also true that, generally speaking, men are not obliged to heroic virtue, at least under pain of serious sin. Does that mean that they are never in a position where an heroic act might be obligatory, even under pain of serious sin? Of course not. Does that mean that a Saint Catherine of Siena was not obliged in any way to drink the polluted water she had just used to wash a cancerous patient when the grace of God was urging her to do so in order to soften the heart of the patient and bring her to repentance? Of course not, though the obligation would probably not have been serious.

To the opposite opinion we may grant that there is an obligation to strive for something more than the minimum; nevertheless a Christian may fulfil his obligation to strive for something more, and yet in fact attain only the minimum, and hence be saved. They are right when they see that a man who aims only at the minimum is almost certain to miss it; they are wrong when they say that he who attains the minimum has missed it. He has not. In fact, let us make it clear right here: the minimum of grace is still an inconceivably wonderful thing; by it a man can preserve his innocence, can love God above all things, can embrace all of his fellow men with real love, can win the kingdom of heaven. Even so, man cannot be satisfied with just the minimum, for even the least perfection urges him on to greater heights.

As usual, the truth lies somewhere between these two extremes and we shall try now to find it, by considering (1) what are we strictly obliged to do in order to be saved; (2) is there

any obligation to acquire the spirit of the counsels; (3) is there ever any obligation to practise heroic virtue?

### **matter of obligation**

What are we strictly obliged to do in order to be saved? "If any man love me, he will keep my commandments." "If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments." What are the commandments? They are expressions of God's law for men, dictating the ways of life; by following them men perfect themselves in this life and prepare for eternal life hereafter.

Obviously we cannot deny that the way of the commandments is the way of life, nor do we desire to do so. We do wish to understand what is involved in this way. One difficulty about insisting on the commandments as the absolutely necessary is the fact that there is in the mind of men an inescapable connection between "keep My commandments" and the ten commandments that God handed to Moses on Mt. Sinai, which Christians will recite when asked what are the commandments of God.

A recent news item carried the story of a resolution passed by a Protestant body to add explicitly to the usual ten commandments an eleventh; "Thou shalt love the Lord Thy God, etc." This is a significant suggestion; it witnesses to the fact that even non-Catholics realize that the ten commandments as listed are not the whole "law and the prophets." In fact, they are all precepts of the virtue of justice, to God and to one's neighbor. With the exception of the positive determination of the Sabbath Day in the third precept, they bind all men, pagans, Jews and Christians. They were not even a minimum for the Jewish people, who also had to fulfil many other precepts in order to be saved. This alone should be a sufficient warning that the follower of Christ must fulfil more than the "ten" commandments.

What, then, must he do to be saved? "Thou shalt love the Lord Thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind. This is the great and most important commandment. And the second in importance is like it: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Precisely what must we do to fulfil this commandment?

First of all, as we have already indicated, there is a minimum that must be fulfilled under pain of violating the commandment itself. We must love nothing more than God, or even equally with Him, we must love nothing contrary to God. We must likewise hold the spiritual welfare of ourselves and our neighbors in higher esteem than any other good. In order to help us keep this minimum, God and the Church have spelled out for us the pre-

cepts of the various virtues, of faith and hope, of prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance. In their light, for example, a man knows that he cannot deny a doctrine of faith presented to him by the Catholic Church without destroying his love of God, or that he cannot appropriate a certain amount of his neighbor's goods without sacrificing his friendship with God. He knows, too, because the Church solemnly teaches it, that with the grace of God he can keep every one of the precepts, can avoid every mortal sin.

### **within the gates?**

Does it follow from this that a man fulfils his obligation if he aims only at fulfilling the minimum? Or does he sin, if he says, and sincerely means it: "I'll be satisfied if I can just get inside the gates of heaven"? Certainly, the soul that will possess the least degree of happiness in heaven will be satisfied, but he will never make it if he only aims at the minimum. Saint Thomas is quite clear in stating that the precept of charity admits of no limit when it is a question of loving God and neighbor. You cannot say that the lowest degree is of precept and the others are only of counsel. The wonderful expression of Saint Bernard sums up the truth briefly: "The measure of loving God is to love Him without measure." If anyone does not wish to love God more, he is failing to fulfil the precept of charity.

In practise, then, charity obliges us under penalty of its loss (1) to fulfil all the precepts of all the virtues; (2) to love and esteem all the grades of charity, up to and including the complete perfection of heaven; (3) desire to make progress along the path of perfection. Note that the object of the first obligation is quite definite—the minimum fulfilment interiorly and exteriorly of the demands of charity. The object of the other two obligations is indefinite—all the grades of perfection, some progress. This object can and must be positively embraced by the interior act of charity; and even the least degree of charity is capable of such an act.

What, then, of the determinate degree of perfection that an individual is to attain; how much progress is he obliged to make over the minimum? The precept of charity does not cover this determination, it must be sought elsewhere. What at any precise moment we are obliged to do is determined by the degree of charity we possess, the state of life in which we find ourselves, the promptings of grace, the inspirations of the Holy Ghost. The obligation here is no longer under pain of mortal sin, but under pain of venial sin. The obligation of the Christian, the very law of charity



itself, is not simply to avoid mortal sin, but to get as far away from it as we can in the measure of the grace we have received. "Grace, like nature," says Saint Thomas, "has a tendency to increase. Hence, those who are in the state of grace ought to increase in grace, and more rapidly, the closer they approach the end." This question is closely connected with our second point about the counsels.

### **spirit of the counsels**

Are we obliged to acquire the spirit of the counsels? We are not concerned here with the question: whether an individual who feels the call of God to embrace a state of perfection, in a religious institute, with the three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, commits a sin by disregarding the call. Did the rich young man commit a mortal sin by refusing the invitation of Christ? Probably not; yet his attachment to riches is endangering the salvation of his soul, or the subsequent words of Christ are meaningless. We can say from Christian experience that if the young man did not grow more detached from his worldly possessions, even though he did not in fact give them up, he would find later on that he could not claim to have fulfilled all the precepts. In other words, the obligation to grow in the spirit of the counsels is simply the other side of the obligation to overcome venial sin. The attachment that is weighing down a soul and weakening its powers of resistance to mortal sin need not be wealth; it may be any created good, it may be the object of any of the seven capital sins.

We have been speaking here only of the obligation, which is light, and of danger of falling into serious sin, which is real. Let us not forget that the rich young man sacrifices a wonderful vocation, an opportunity to enjoy a greater degree of glory in heaven, a chance to be ecstatically happy here below in the service of His Master.

### **do we ever have to be heroic?**

Is there ever any obligation to practice heroic virtue? We come to our last point. This question may be understood in two ways. First of all, in regard to that ultimate state of perfection, attained by many saints, in which the practice of heroic virtue is usual with them. And, secondly, are there occasions on which every Christian is obliged to perform an act of heroic virtue?

Heroic virtue, in the first sense, has been well explained by Benedict XIV, who lists four conditions that are required before the virtues of a person can be called heroic: (1) the matter, that is, the object of the virtue, must be difficult, above the common

strength of men; (2) the acts must be accomplished easily, promptly; (3) they must be accomplished joyously, with the joy of offering a sacrifice to the Lord; (4) they must be performed rather frequently, when the occasion presents itself.

Obviously, no one is obliged to arrive at such a degree of perfection under pain of losing his soul. Yet the soul that has arrived at the higher degrees of perfection cannot refuse to perform a specific act of heroic virtue if his infused prudence tells him it is God's will that he do it and his charity urges him on, without committing a venial sin. To refuse to do it simply on the ground that he is exercising his freedom is not a legitimate motive, for we were given freedom, not simply to exercise it, but to become perfect.

As to the second meaning of our question, are there occasions on which every Christian is obliged to an act of heroic virtue, the reply is quite definitely yes, and even under pain of mortal sin. If a Christian is caught in a persecution and required to deny his faith, he must accept death, which is a heroic act of charity. In the highly hypothetical case of a mother who must risk death rather than the destruction of her unborn child, she knows that God is asking her to make a heroic act and she is as much a martyr as the man who dies for the faith.

### **heroic continence**

Another instance was cited by our Holy Father just recently in his famous address to Italian Midwives. He discussed the case of the married couple who must practice total abstinence because artificial birth control is forbidden and natural birth control is unsafe. Insisting that total abstinence is the only solution, the Holy Father continues: "But it will be objected that such abstinence is impossible, that such heroism cannot be attained." And adds later: "It is wronging men and women of our times to deem them incapable of continuous heroism. Today, for many reasons—perhaps with the goad of hard necessity or even sometimes in the service of injustice—heroism is exercised to a degree and to an extent which would have been thought impossible in days gone by. Why, then, should this heroism stop at the borders established by the passions and inclinations of nature?"

How can we tell when we are obliged to practice an act of heroic virtue? Whenever not to practice it would involve committing a mortal sin.

### **sowing bountifully**

In conclusion, let us sum up briefly the course of our argument. He who has charity has the strength to fulfil all the de-

mands of charity. He must fulfil all the precepts of all the virtues; that is, he must avoid each and every mortal sin. He must have a real love and appreciation for the vast perfection that charity can lead a man to; he must sincerely desire to make some advance along that path of perfection. All this, since it is concerned with the end of the precept, the perfection of charity, escapes the measurement even of infused prudence.

What steps he must take, what venial sins overcome, what acts of virtue practice, all this must be determined by the situations in which he finds himself and in the light of prudence.

And lastly, no one should decide, unless he has a special revelation from God, that God does not want him to be a great saint. As Saint Teresa said: "It is always a good time for God to make saints," and she meant great ones. Great saints are not always great at the beginning; so till we have reached the end, let us not hinder the designs of God by a self-satisfied mediocrity. "He who sows sparingly shall also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully shall also reap bountifully."

---



#### NO REPLY

**"Must Catholics be heroic?"**

**She overheard them say.**

**And then the cancer patient asked,**

**"Is there another way?"**



## Excelsa Fidelitas

ONE of the great heroes of the modern Church is Maximilian Kaller, deceased bishop of the "Wandering Church" in Germany. Monsignor Fittkau, now director of the Saint Boniface Society in New York, was the bishop's secretary during the war.

**Gerhard A. Fittkau:** The world took notice with surprise and respect of a spectacular demonstration of Catholic faith a few weeks ago in the ruins of the highly-contested city of Berlin. Not even the Olympic Stadium, which can seat 120,000 people, was large enough to accommodate all the people who attended the 75th National Congress of the Catholics of Germany. The great majority of these people had braved difficulties and threats from the communist-dominated Russian Zone, the so-called German Democratic Republic, to demonstrate their loyalty to the Church and to strengthen their own faith in order to endure what is in store for them. The whole city, the Russian Sector included, was hung with posters on which Christ stretched out His arms over the ruins with the reassuring words, "God Lives!" Thousands of people throughout the city could be seen wearing a small cross, symbol of the Congress—the same cross which had been worn on the robes of the early missionaries of this Brandenburg area one thousand years ago.

In all the meetings, general demonstrations and workshops of the Congress it was repeated again and again that this great gathering was something never before experienced. The leaders pointed out that the people had come not *to a rally* but *on a pilgrimage*. Those who had eyes to see and ears to listen did not need such warnings; they could see and feel that the whole character of these days was formed by a deep religious and even mystic reality.

It was a joyful assurance of God's great grace after the trials this war-torn nation had suffered. These people, who had borne the loss of all the rich traditions of the Church in their homelands from which they had been expelled, obviously had accepted the challenge of their new situation and made the Church visible again in territories where it had not been seen for centuries. Amid utter destitution and dispersion in the heartlands of once Protestant Germany, hundreds of thousands of the faithful have accepted the cross placed on their shoulders during and after the war.

### **modern martyrs**

Under the same Cross erected in the Olympic Stadium a year ago to unite Protestant Christians in their great demonstration of

faith, these Catholic pilgrims celebrated the memory of the thousands of their Christian brethren martyred for their faith during the past and present tyrannies. One of the most impressive celebrations was held for all those priests and laymen of the diocese of Berlin and from all different parts of Germany who were executed in the Ploetzensee prison. The new Bishop of Berlin, Most Rev. Wilhelm Weskamm, announced that at the place of execution a church and shrine would be erected to the honor of the Forty Holy Martyrs of Berlin.

This same spirit has kept fifteen hundred priests going in the Russian Zone. Despite the communist terror they are trying to build up the Church among the human derelicts washed into this territory by the bloody flood from the east. Most of these priests have themselves been exiled and deprived of all means of regular pastoral work. They have carried their whole church on their backs to offer the Holy Sacrifice in thousands of places, trying to build islands of new life of the Church. Without material or political security the Church here is strong and full of life and promise, rooted in deep trust and complete surrender to the hidden designs of God's will and economy.

### **the "new Diaspora"**

But this visible event which cannot be overlooked has come forth only as the result of the sacrifice of innumerable heroic missionaries and militant Christians who accepted the fate of being set forth in the dispersion in anti-Catholic environments.

A willing instrument of divine providence in remolding the Church from the atomized ruins of the former established Church life was Bishop Maximilian Kaller of Ermland (East Prussia), the Father of the "Wandering Church," who died in 1947 as the special papal delegate for 6,000,000 Catholic German expellees. His message in the darkest years was always the same: "The new Diaspora will not be the grave of the Church but the cradle of renewed faith."

From his early priesthood he had been engaged in mission work among the migrating Polish laborers of northern Germany and had been one of the most fruitful promoters of the lay apostolate. His work was just beginning, however, when he was intrusted the north-eastern-most diocese of Germany, which comprises the whole province of East Prussia. Here, in the midst of thirty-two almost entirely Protestant counties of the former Prince-Bishop of Ermland, Bishop Kaller labored fifteen years to make his people what he called "Diaspora-proof"—fit to withstand the test of faith when they had to emigrate to other counties and

when, during the Nazi times, they were taken into labor camps or the armed services. From the school-children on up to all the members of Catholic organizations he tried to raise up Christians with the spirit of apostolic fortitude and responsibility.

What he achieved bore fruit in the terrible days after the war when his diocese was hit worse than any other. In this entirely Catholic population more than one third was killed by the invading Red Army, or died of starvation in forced labor camps in Russia. The remainder were dispersed like no other people along the shore of the Baltic and North Sea. Unanimously the bishops of postwar Germany have acknowledged that no group like Ermland-Catholics have proven able to master the Diaspora situation in preserving not only the faith themselves but in being ready also for any apostolic task. The priests of his diocese paid the largest blood toll of any in eastern Europe (except the dioceses of the Uniate Eastern Rite). Almost the entire clergy refused to flee before the Russian troops and out of the 350 priests who had survived the Nazi time, 127 paid for their fidelity to their flocks with their death.

In order to disillusion and confuse the people the bishop himself was kidnapped by the Gestapo and driven on foot under indescribable difficulties across the frozen Frische Haff of the Baltic Sea to the concentration camp of Stutthof near Danzig. Unsuccessfully he protested that the greatest wrong that could ever be done him was to separate him from his people. From Stutthof he was driven to Hallein Saxony which was soon taken by the Western Allies and surrendered by them to the Russians. Unable to obtain help or permission from any authorities, and with the episcopal "ring of fidelity" burning his finger, he put two suitcases on a hand cart, a bread bag on his breast, a knapsack on his back and walked 600 miles eastward to Ermland. Hitch-hiking on all kinds of vehicles the bishop reached his destination after an unspeakably dangerous journey of about a month and entered his diocese illegally. Shortly after his arrival, under ignominious circumstances he was made to renounce his jurisdiction in the part of his diocese now under Polish administration. Then he was expelled a second time by the new communist authorities of his territory. Exhausted, sick and penniless before the ruins of his life's work, God let his fidelity to his vocation rise to its highest fulfillment—like another Saint John Chrysostom who suffered similar injustices 1,500 years ago. Both watched their cathedrals burn when first expelled. Both suffered even greater pain when their second exile was induced by shameful intrigues. Bishop



Kaller did not complain and "praising God for everything"—words of the dying Chrysostom—he shared in exile the heaviest burdens of his expelled people.

### **father of expellees**

Back in Halle he asked the Holy Father to send him as a simple camp-chaplain to the German prisoners in France, if there was no other work for him. But the Holy Father did not accept this suggestion and gave him a task for which God had prepared him during his long apostolic life as priest and bishop of the "Wandering Church." He became the special papal delegate and father of all expellees, the visible incarnation of the unparalleled distress of his people and also the living symbol of the love of the Church for them in their misery. With no material means, freezing in his unheated part of a flat in an overcrowded and damaged house in Frankfurt, he gave himself completely to his new task until he died from exhaustion in the summer of 1947. He led his people to bear the cross of their expulsion, accusing no one but always pointing to "the Cross and Crucified Love" as the only way out of their distress. He never complained about the shocking lack of understanding, the poverty in which he lived (a few weeks before his death he had to borrow from his secretary, to whom he could pay no salary, the week's ration of potatoes and horsemeat). He did not complain about the superhuman amount of work demanded from him. He accepted these difficulties as the price for the blessing of God, for which he prayed every morning at the destroyed crypt of the Church of Saint Boniface in Frankfurt. His only complaint was that he could not visit Our Lord in the Tabernacle during the day and could not hold his meditation before the Blessed Sacrament.

### **precious document**

Among the handful of his personal belongings after his sudden death (he died with his shoes on as he had predicted a few weeks before) were discovered two precious papers he had saved in his breast pocket. One was the shorthand draft of a letter to the Apostolic Nuncio in Berlin. The other was the original of the answer of the Nuncio. When Bishop Kaller's letter was transcribed Professor Joseph Lortz, leading Church historian of Germany, declared this document one of the most important of modern Church history in Germany. The letter reveals the secret of the heroism of this saintly bishop, the most representative figure of the missionary Church of postwar Germany. It is not a literary product but a document written with the heart's blood, the summary of the life of a modern apostle. It grew out of decades of

zealous and faithful fulfillment of daily strenuous priestly work—formed and inspired by his faithful practice of daily spiritual exercises: his hour's meditation, his reading of the Bible, his sincere examination of conscience, his strong and tender devotion to the Mother of Apostles, and above all by his ever deeper surrender into the mysteries of the Holy Sacrifice of the altar.

It is not the document of an intellectual, of a great theological genius, of a great writer or zealot, but the true and sincere expression of humble readiness to do and to suffer everything in order to follow obediently the call of Christ as it appeals to him from the needs of the Church and as it is confirmed by the authority of the Church.

Although the document is self-explanatory for the most part, it may be mentioned that the immediate occasion was a visit to the Nuncio in Berlin, in connection with a meeting of priests engaged in special care of the "Wandering Church"—pastoral care of labor camps, youth camps, and many other establishments where hundreds of thousands of Catholic young people were taken from their families into environments deprived of any Christian atmosphere. During the visit the Nuncio asked the bishop to help him find a chaplain for the Catholics of Jewish origin in the concentration camp of St. Theresienstadt. The answer to the suggestion is the following document which the bishop wrote at a time when his prestige was at its greatest and also when the political power of Germany seemed to be the strongest, extending from the Atlantic to the gates of Asia, a year before the turn of events at Stalingrad and El-Alamein.

Maximilian Kaller  
Bishop of Ermland  
Frauenburg, February 27, 1942

His Excellency  
Archbishop Dr. Cesare Orsenigo  
Apostolic Nuncio to Germany

Most Reverend Excellency:

In our discussion of the 2nd of February, Your Excellency asked if during the meeting of the "Wandering Church" mention was made whether a priest had offered his services for pastoral work among Non-Aryan Catholics in the concentration camp in St. Theresienstadt, to which I had to answer that, until then, no one had reported. Your Excellency then added that the spirit of readiness for great self-sacrifice seemingly had vanished. This comment has given me no peace; it burns within me. As soon as I returned home I inquired about the qualifications which a priest appointed for the Ghetto must have, particularly whether he may be of Non-Aryan descent. I stated at that time that I would be willing to assist

in choosing such a priest. I intended to make my letter to Your Excellency dependent on the answer to my inquiry. However, I have received no instruction or information of any kind. But now I shall not wait any longer to make known my desire.

I myself should like to be that priest willing to devote himself to the care of the souls of Non-Aryan Christians. However, as a matter of course, I want to subject any wish of mine unconditionally to your discretion, since any order or desire of my ecclesiastical superiors is holy to me. After my return from Berlin my attention was drawn by mere accident to the meditation *De dispositione ad martyrium* in my meditation book. The meditation was developed from the words of a martyr: "Brethren, let us not step down from the high aspirations of the children of God." For days I have kept this meditation in order to come to a clear understanding about the idea of the *excelsa fidelitas*, which I define as magnanimous loyalty and fidelity.

The meditation book gives four points which, together, constitute the idea of the *excelsa fidelitas*.

(1) The starting point must be God (not serving to the eye, as it were pleasing men, but as the servants of Christ *doing the will of God from the heart*, with a good will serving the Lord and not men). I asked myself if I were making the resolution to go to the Ghetto for God's sake or to be seen before men—in order to please men. It is possible that something of this human respect is hidden in my desire. On the other hand, human praise and approval could hardly be expected; many would not understand such a resolution at all; others would laugh at me or call me crazy, and possibly this resolution may mean the beginning of my persecution. And because, humanly speaking, I venture wholly into the uncertain without any human support, I am obliged to depend wholly on God. I believe and hope that my will corresponds to the will of God. However, *I shall always remain faithful to a higher discernment.*

(2) *Excelsa fidelitas* shall embrace everything. I shall keep nothing for myself, shall look for no exceptions or make any reservations, but shall fulfill my duties according to the orders which will be given to me. My model shall be Saint Francis of Assisi who observed the word of God literally. All this I shall, perhaps, not be able to carry out to its fullest extent. It will require a long time of practice, but the will to do it is there, that I may say.

(3) To the *excelsa fidelitas* belongs also the consideration of circumstances, above all work "according to the mind of the proper authority." I could not think of anything else except to work exactly in accordance with the intentions of the Holy Father.

(4) To the *excelsa fidelitas* belongs the "overcoming of everything that might tempt us to infidelity: human respect, fear of work, laziness, sensuality." This fourth requirement is not yet fulfilled. That is, no doubt, my whole life's task. I should like to believe that by declaring my readiness to make this offer I shall obtain a powerful impetus for the overcoming of the above obstacles.

. Many objections may certainly be made against my appointment:



(1) He leaves his post in these troubled times; he becomes a deserter. Yes, if I should like a new appointment in order to be freed from that office, or perhaps to escape the persecution which might begin later, this reproach might be raised in all justice. But is what I want for the future not comparatively much more difficult than what I have now? At present (but perhaps not forever) I have a secure position. I have my home; I have faithful Catholic priests and laymen backing me. I also have opportunities for apostolic work, even today. It is even interesting to find, again and again, new ways in the continuation of the pastoral ministry. Of a new appointment I could say in all truthfulness, "Behold, we have left everything"; to me nothing remains of what I have. Before me lies only the "leave everything" and the "salvation of souls."

(2) It could be said that the episcopal chair may have to remain vacant; therefore a bishop may not resign of his own free will. That certainly is an objection which deserves attention, especially because there is no auxiliary bishop here. About this the Holy See would have to decide. It might, however, be possible to appoint an auxiliary in case an *episcopus ordinarius* could not be obtained. To these, and other objections, I should like to answer that as far as I am concerned I should like to be where I could do most for the honor and glory of God. If this is accomplished by my sacrifice, if I may call it that, then I shall gladly make it. But if this is more certainly attained by remaining in my office, then I shall acquiesce without hesitation.

Your Excellency, I have tried to express subjectively my desire as sincerely as possible; whether objectively I judge myself and my desire correctly I do not know, because self-interest and temptations are so closely intertwined with human nature that one doesn't know or even surmise how deep-rooted these enemies are. Therefore, I resign myself all the more readily to your discretion in this matter for which I confidently ask. In case you may consider a personal interview desirable, please order me to come to Berlin.

With deepest respect, I remain Your Excellency's devoted  
(signed) Maximilian Kaller

In his answer the Apostolic Nuncio said that although he had read the letter like a genuine letter of Saint Francis he regretted he could not accept the offer. What the Holy See could not accept at that time God did Himself take a few years later when the bishop had to make even greater sacrifices. By the grace of God he grew to the stature of the Holy Martyrs and Confessors of the Church, and became even after his death a constant inspiration to all those who are forced, or have volunteered, to follow in his footsteps in fulfilling the work he had to leave undone in the reconstruction of the Church—which can be renewed and perfected by the "*excelsa fidelitas*," the magnanimous fidelity of bishops, priests and faithful who have the courage to follow Christ on His Way of the Cross.



## Saint Therese and Heroism

**W**E are including the following article to assure our readers of the accessibility of heroism.

**Dorothy Dohen:** Some years ago I had a conversation about Saint Therese with an enthusiastic lay apostle who couldn't understand her. "Why," she queried, "should Pius XI, who after all is the Pope of Catholic Action, have chosen her as his patroness when she never did a thing to transform her environment?"

The Young Christian Workers—the Jocists throughout the world—hail her as their patroness, the priest-workers and the priests for the Mission of France study under her gaze. Saint Therese is secure as the sponsor of the modern apostolate. Why? "When she never did a thing to transform her environment."

That statement is obviously not true. Transform her environment she did—not however in what we might consider the most direct way. She never joined a cell (though she lived in one), never took part in an inquiry, never set out to reform the convent in which she lived—yet transform she did. Transform her environment to such an extent that no Carmelite convent is the same since she lived and died in one. We have Thomas Merton's word that the Trappists are marked by her spirituality; contemplative life in general felt the fresh air of her eager love of God blow the dust of rigorism from its cloister walks. And over and above that the Church as a whole felt her influence. "In the heart of my Mother the Church I will be *love*," she declared, and the Church felt her love and the children of the Church did too. What does a young factory worker, or a salesgirl, or a young mother have in common with her? Nine years in a convent, dead at twenty-four—that was her life. She never did anything great; she was merely constantly faithful in little things. She knew very little about the world. One subway trip is more of an eye-opener to us on the grim realities of life than anything she probably heard or saw in a lifetime. "Sheltered" was the word for her life. A small-town French girl brought up in a staid family, conventional Victorian, narrow bourgeois. Narrow—yet strangely universal. Sheltered—yet somehow open to the world, so that in all classes, countries, and groups of the apostolate there are people who have learned to love from her. She has had an inexplicable personal influence. People read other saints and admire. Therese they imitate.



## that no one may be mediocre

And that is her secret and her providential mission. Why is she taken into the factory as patroness, why does she preside over Catholic Action meetings, why does she help influence "contacts"? Because she has made heroism accessible to all Christians. "It is given to no one to be mediocre," says the Pope, all Christians must be aware of their apostolic obligations to win the world for Christ, to leaven the mass, to transform, to convert. A multitude of heroes, of whole-souled Christians is needed. Where then is the model? God gave it to us in Saint Therese. A heroine to make heroism accessible without making it less heroic, to make sanctity imitable without causing it to be less holy, to make the love of God attractive by stripping it of all extraneous dramatics and showing it as it is in itself—simple and unadorned.

When Leon Bloy wrote that the saint can become a prostitute and the prostitute can become a saint, but neither has anything in common with the woman of the *bourgeoisie*, he was not counting on Therese. For here was a woman of the *bourgeoisie* who did become a saint, and who could love and understand the prostitute. Here was a woman to give the lie to that false simplification of sanctity which only sees it painted in vivid and dramatic colors, which claims that only the sinner can become the saint, only those who trod in the mire can know the glory.

## source of mystification

Therese is, I say, a scandal to those who want their saints to be inaccessible. They are horrified by her undramatic heroism, by her ordinariness, by her commonplace qualities. Her writing is couched in the language of her times, her taste in art betrays the limitations of her education. She gives no satisfaction to the spiritual snobs who want spirituality to be esoteric, who want mysticism to be a source of mystification. In the same great tradition as Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross, she indirectly restored their teaching by removing from it the romantic "mysticity" glued on it by their lesser followers. For Therese brought spirituality back to its beginnings. Her heroism is the heroism of the Gospel. "Unless you be converted and become as little children you shall not enter into the kingdom."

Therese is not the heroine for the college sophomore. The simple can understand her, and so can the wise. Thomas Merton says that he was first repelled by her seeming stickiness, then after awhile penetrated to the hard core of her holiness and recognized a saint "greater than the rest." And whether we agree with him on this (for who is to weigh the relative value of God's heroes?)

we should still be moved humbly to seek and find for ourselves her heroism. For it seems that Therese is a treasure revealed by God only to His little ones.

### **the perverted "little way"**

If her heroism has failed to receive recognition from natural hero-worshippers, it has failed equally to be recognized for what it is by many of her devotees. Only too eagerly have they pounced upon the "little way" and mistaken it for the easy way. Only too eagerly have they grabbed for the roses, not realizing her way is the way of the cross. Favors by the handful, a comfortable life, an easy passage into eternity is what they seek from her—not realizing what she teaches is the necessity of sacrifice, an unfailing fidelity in little things, a constant loving acceptance of suffering. Peace?—yes, her way offers that, but it is peace in taking up one's cross daily. Joy?—yes, but it is "joy at having no joy," joy in surrender to the merciful love of God, joy in "doing always the things that please Him." The way of spiritual childhood is the way of the Gospels, the way of simplicity, of love, but it is not the way of childishness, of immaturity, of irresponsibility. Abandonment to providence and trust in God as a loving Father exact a corresponding measure of faithfulness in His service. Therese made complex ideas simple (she reduced sanctity to its essential—love), but she did not make deep ideas shallow. Sanctity did not become, because of her, safe and secure (that is, to our nature). In her way as in the way of the Gospels, "He who loveth his life shall lose it."

### **infinite mercy**

Therese lived in complete faithfulness, in complete trust. It was God Who would make her a saint—but it was Therese who would let Him do it! She made sanctity accessible because she showed that it depended on His grace and not on her efforts—"that the eagle would swoop down and bear away His prey," but she knew too that it depended on her readiness to be at His disposal. "The weak things of the world" God would continue to use, and Therese knew it. Not those who were secure in their natural capacities, who thought themselves to be of heroic mettle, capable of great struggle and conquest, but *little souls*. "If by any possibility Thou couldst find one weaker than mine, one which should abandon itself with perfect trust to Thy Infinite Mercy, I feel that Thou wouldst take delight in loading that soul with still greater favors."

That is what she said, and that, I think, is what she meant. It was not a case of falsely-humble self-depreciation. She admitted

the gifts of grace she had received, but acknowledged that God was ready to give still greater. And that, it seems to me, is a reason for hope today—for hope for a heroism that will be divine rather than human, yet can be had for the asking. Supreme confidence will be rewarded and God yields Himself to an eager heart.

### **to live an ordinary life**

Heroism—Saint Therese points the way to it. A heroism that is not at all superfluous but basic to the Christian life. For can we hazard a guess that this is the first age since the establishment of Christianity in which it requires heroism to live an ordinary Christian life? Everything is topsy-turvy. Would anyone think it requires heroism to have four children? Yet many people are finding today that it does. Heroism is relative to circumstances. If annual or biennial babies are the rule in a neighborhood, prolific parents do not require heroic qualities. They are just “doing what comes naturally,” with the supports of public opinion and a sympathetic environment. In a more Christian age people whose personal virtue was mediocre could be carried along on a heavenward tide. They were born, grew up, married, had children, remained faithful to their spouses, took in their aged parents, educated their children in common decency, married them off, then helped out with their own grandchildren, and were gathered to their fathers—all in conformance with the custom of their age, without having risen a whit above average virtue. They were merely doing the socially-acceptable thing.

But now it is different. To lead a normal Christian life one must be willing to go against custom. To be *ordinary* (according to the Christian “order”) one must be heroic. It may be objected that ordinary people should not be required to practice heroism; the fact is that today in increasing numbers they are being required to do so. We may lament this and see as the purpose of our social apostolate the establishment of a society where people can live a normal Christian life without insuperable difficulty, but meanwhile we are living as we are, in the age we are. To water down the ideal, to make endless compromises is not going to solve the problem. We are like sick men so weak that we are ready to accept an ever lower norm of health. Does not it seem rather that the answer is to keep the ideal, but to make the ideal possible? To build up health gradually?

### **the potentiality of weakness**

Saint Therese indicated the way to make the ideal practical. The “little way” bridges a heroic gap. There is the first step: the



acknowledgment of our nothingness—that of myself I cannot battle the world, that I cannot face the social stigma of another pregnancy, that I cannot endure the loneliness of never getting married, that I cannot stand the weariness of being condemned to a monotonous job, that I cannot keep my values straight in a world that is askew. The first step—the acknowledgment of impotence—and then the next: to find in one's impotence the reason for confidence. *God can do all* if we will accept His grace, if we acknowledge our need. Therese has taught us the potentiality of weakness.

The more we are convinced of the magnitude of our task in the Christian restoration, the more we should take refuge in our weakness. To transform our environment—let alone to transform the world—is beyond us. *Veni, Sanctificator Omnipotens*. In the knowledge of the greatness and goodness of God is our security; the realization of His abounding love is our strength.

### **dying daily**

The secular hero dies once; the saint dies daily. And it is part of the genius of Therese that she pointed out a simple and effective way to this daily dying. For the Christian is called to die to himself that he may live in Christ. Great saints have performed great acts of mortification that they may hasten this process, but their example is beyond us. Their penances are beyond our physical capacities, their practices are not in keeping with the demands of the lay vocation or with life in the modern world. It was providential that Therese was moved to realize that she could not practice the heroic mortifications of the saints (in fact, she came to realize the harmful effect of many of these practices in nourishing the pride of lesser souls who saw in them proof of their justification) and to substitute for them the constant acceptance of the little sacrifices, the little trials of daily living.

An integral part of this daily death is the perfect performance of our duties. Therese in realizing this was following the example of Jesus in His thirty years at Nazareth—thirty years of fidelity to commonplace, unglamorous duty. (Devotees of the "little way" sometimes distort it by accepting too readily the world's notion of "duty." The "little way" is intelligent, if it is anything; it presupposes the formation of a Christian conscience, and urges fidelity to that duty proposed to us by the mind of Christ, not by the spirit of the world.) To practice all one's duties with ease and spontaneity sounds deceptively easy; it is easy until one tries to do it. If anyone thinks the "little way" is a snap, he merely has to try

living it all of one entire day to find out how much virtue it requires.

And yet the material for the practice of the "little way" is in reach of all of us. It is the fabric of all our lives. It is a fact open to ready corroboration that people today are moved to boundless self-pity; yet the very things we gripe about unceasingly are the things that could be regarded as an invitation to heroism. For instance, the answer to this invitation determines whether the single woman is going to regard her situation of never being settled, of always feeling like a fifth wheel, as proof that she is doomed to be hopelessly frustrated, or as proof that God is asking her to die more quickly to herself in willingly relinquishing normal human consolations that she may be more quickly His.

Part of the heroism of the "little way" is that it calls for a silent, continued endurance. All of Therese's sacrifices were small (at least apparently) but they were constant. And most of us have had the experience of being able to rise to a difficult occasion but finding ourselves bogged down by a very petty annoyance of daily living, especially if it continues over any length of time. It may be foolish to cry over spilt milk, but it requires heroism *never* to cry over spilt milk, never to yield to discouragement over the trifling upsets and misunderstandings of human existence, never to refuse to recognize in the difficulties that befall us the loving touch of God's hand. To adore God's Will in everything that happens to us all day long is a great proof of our love for Him. I heard recently of a woman with seven small children who is without hot water and has had to do all her washing in cold water over a period of many months. All I could think to myself was what a wonder she would be if she never once griped about it!

But in following her way Therese offers us hope. If there are numerous opportunities to prove our love for God every day, there are numerous occasions to fail every day. It is in our reaction to our faults and our failings that we show whether or not we have grasped the secret of the "little way." For souls who are convinced of their nothingness run more readily to their Father the more they see their need.

### **the heroism of the new commandment**

We are called to prove our love for God by our service to men. The heroism of the "little way" is bound up very closely with the heroism of the new commandment. "A new commandment I give unto you," said Our Lord, "that you love one another as I have loved you."

It was the staggering realization of what this meant that spurred Therese on to ever greater love of her neighbor. To love as Christ loves—is the commandment He gives us. Where are we going to begin to do it if not to those right around us, who live and work with us? Therese had a peculiarly limited number of persons to love—for the first fifteen years the members of her immediate family, then for the remaining nine the Sisters in her enclosed convent. Her situation paralleled most of ours in a way, in that she always was living with the same group of people, had to endure their same quirks and foibles, had to exercise her charity on them over and over again. Not living in a cloister we are more fortunate in that we can meet new people, meet Christ in other guises. But for the most part we have to seek to serve Him as He presents Himself in a limited number of persons.

The pages on fraternal charity are among the most helpful in Therese's autobiography. As she tells of her efforts and struggles to get along with this one and that, we are struck by the homeliness of her difficulties, the universality of her experience. The happiness of any home, the success of any apostolic group depend in the last analysis on the exercise of charity among its members. More apostolates have been ruined by failure to "love one another as Christ loves," than through any sort of ideological disagreements. The ultimate success of the modern apostolate as a whole will lie in the triumph of charity. As Therese convinced her Sisters of the soundness of her "little way" by the demonstration of her heroic charity, we shall convince the world of Christ and transform our environment by our love.

### **the heroism of desire**

But we can only show our love to a few people, yet the more we love the more we desire to love. Charity of its very nature has a universal extension. If we love Christ, we desire everyone to love Him; if we are apostles we cannot stop at wanting to transform our environment, we desire to transform the world. We cannot be content with one work, we desire to do every work that the Church needs to have done. Such is the impulse of love. Therese puts it: "To be Thy spouse, O my Jesus, to be a daughter of Carmel, and by my union with Thee to be the mother of souls, should not all this content me? Yet other vocations make themselves felt, and I would wield the sword, I would be a Priest, an Apostle, a Martyr, a Doctor of the Church, I would accomplish the most heroic deeds—the spirit of the Crusader burns within me, and I would gladly die on the battlefield in defense of the Church."



The "little way" is not the narrow way. So great must be its love that it reaches out to embrace the world. From Saint Therese the factory worker learns that the small service he does to his fellow worker, if it is done with great love, can reach out and affect the world. The mother of small children, with limited apostolic opportunities, learns that her constant, patient charity can have far-reaching results. "Every true Christian must in some way be an apostle," Pope Pius XII declared in a recent letter marking the twenty-fifth anniversary of the proclamation of Saint Therese as patroness of the missions. "Although it is reserved for only a few to go to far-off countries, yet Saint Therese of the Child Jesus teaches us to make our daily Christian life an apostolic offering for missions—an act highly meritorious and highly efficacious."

So highly efficacious was the life of Therese that in the first quarter of this century with China under her patronage, one and one quarter million Chinese were converted—more than were converted in the whole preceding century. Such is the poetic effect of a prosaic life; such is the tremendous power of love—even if it is love hidden in great desire and revealed only in little things. That is why Therese is to us an invitation, and a challenge, and a consolation. An invitation "to go up higher," to aspire to the heights. A challenge to face suffering, and not to flee the cross. A consolation that "with God all things are possible," even to our becoming heroes and saints.

In addition the practice of the "little way" is the best preparation we can have in case—as may very well happen—God allows us to partake in any of that sterner, more dramatic suffering that is being inflicted upon His martyrs throughout the world. "He who is faithful in that which is little is faithful in that which is greater."

### **CHRISTIAN CHRISTMAS CARDS**

designed by Lauren Ford, Sr. Mary of the Compassion, O.P., Sr. Mary Jean, O.P., Claude Ponsot and other contemporary artists. 20 for \$1.00. Mariart, 486 East 141st Street, Bronx 54, N. Y. Mail orders only.



## NICE GUY

He's not handsome,  
maybe clean-cut, tall enough,  
getting a little flabby now,  
but open-faced and good tempered.  
Sure, he hates Jews and niggers,  
but after all you can't blame a guy,  
gotta make a livin'.  
Has two kids and a dog—  
you should see him play ball with them,  
loves the pup too—  
real human type.  
Cultured too—Book of the Month Club,  
not stuffy though,  
you know—a nice guy.  
You can always count on him  
for a couple of bucks for the Community Chest,  
yea, a good man—  
goes to Church almost every week.  
Not that he's a bore,  
he tells some of the best stories you ever heard  
(you know what I mean!),  
and holds his drinks with the best of 'em.  
And shrewd as they come,  
gets out of more tight spots!  
Very friendly feller,  
you know—a real nice guy.

BARBARA L. SAMSON

# Heroism and the Conscripted Conscience

**T**HE formation of a Christian conscience is a requisite for heroic action. Jerem O'Sullivan-Barra, who has contributed to Integrity in the past, draws on personal experience to awaken us to the dangers of the conscripted conscience.

**Jerem O'Sullivan - Barra:** When Thomas More was borne from Westminster Hall to the Tower of London with the edge of the axe pointed toward him as a sign of the death penalty for treason, his most bitter suffering was hardly for himself. He was at peace, and his constant wit showed the brightness of his spirit. It must have been a very lonely feeling to accept death for the Church of Christ, for the principle that no layman could usurp the headship of that Church, when as his judges taunted him bishops and abbots found it possible to conform to the new ways of the national church.

Praying that he might see even his judges "in heaven merrily together to our eternal salvation," More could pursue no other course than that of heroic protest leading to solitary separation and death. But though conformism on the part of the greater number of ecclesiastics and lay people alike won the day, it was such heroic protest that testified to the integrity of the Church.

When toward the end of World War II, Max Joseph Metzger walked from the Berlin People's Tribunal with his hands fettered as a sign that he had been given the death sentence for treason, he must have seemed a pathetically lonely figure. He rejoiced in the fact that he, a priest, could offer up his life for peace, at a time when the Mystical Body was being rent apart by the faithful. "I am longing to work for an honorable peace and if need be, to die for it," he had written. After six months of continuous chains, Father Metzger walked to the beheading block of Brandenburg Prison convinced that his action for peace was a true affirmation of Christ's kingdom on earth in a time of mass slaughter.

Between the beheading of Thomas More in 1535 and the beheading of Father Metzger in 1944, the national state as we know it had grown in power so that it could swallow up the supra-national religion, and then the supra-national man, or Christian. The state which in More's time had torn its anchors away from absolute principles had by the time of Metzger's trial gathered



all absolutes to itself. All power in National Socialist Germany rested in the nation-state, or more precisely in the group that had seized control of the nation-state. Citizens were to find their destiny by obediently merging their destiny with that of the state—by becoming slaves in peace or in war.

### **the role of protest**

In such a situation, according to many, there is a special role for the Christian; to stand up in protest against the current of the day, even if this protest is completely unknown to other Christians. By their protest they assert the rule of the highest of human attributes, moral conscience. Never was the role of protest more important than it is in our day, when the aim of the absolute state is to mold a man who responds only to pressures, threats and dictates that impinge on him from the outside. This is in basic contradiction to the Christian ideal of the man whose outer actions arise in response to the inner promptings which come from a rightly-formed conscience.

We all know that in Germany, and in the entire Fortress-Europe during the years of World War II, the bodies and minds of men (even their consciences) were conscripted by a regime of barbaric force that grew up in the womb of Europe's highest culture. Free associations, including the various forms of Catholic Action and other church and non-governmental organizations were eventually destroyed, so that nothing intervened between the powerless, lonely entity of a totally conscripted man, and the total power of a monolithic state.

We do not forget that the individual who resisted the regime by sheltering the persecuted, by printing and distributing censored literature, including the letters of bishops to their flocks, or by speaking against the cult of racism and war, were forced either to flee, or to suffer the penalties imposed by the group that had captured the state. Many Christians met the challenge of the monolithic state, and thus invited removal from their positions, internment in concentration camp, and often death. Surrounded as they were by naked force, by spies and threats and an enveloping terror, they followed the lead of conscience.

### **the masses engulfed**

Many reasons have been given to account for the fact that the great masses of the people were captured by the state and turned into instruments—willing or unwilling—of a monstrous policy of persecution and aggressive war. Catholics, along with their protestant and unbelieving brothers, were caught up and carried in the engulfing avalanche of the new statism. Some claim that

the spiritual leaders in Germany were not sufficiently clarified in their statements at the outbreak of a demonstrably unjust war by Germany on its neighbors. Others point out that when the German armies attacked Poland the German Catholic bishops, whose statements against Nazism had been strong and courageous, resisted all pressures to say a word in favor of the war effort. It is pointed out that if the German hierarchy had openly declared the war to be unjust they would have created a terrible and unendurable crisis of conscience for those masses of men, powerless entities, who had been drafted as soldiers through no choice of their own. To suggest to the ordinary folk that their act of following their leaders was probably sinful, would be tantamount to asking heroic acts of resistance and renunciation of great groups of people.

### **heroism by demand**

The heroism that was not asked of the people in the realm of conscience in the first year of the war, was asked by circumstance in the last year of that war. The cities of Germany were pounded by a rain of fire that had never been experienced by man before. The millions of the civilian population in eastern Germany who did not know the poundings of air raids, lost their homes in another way. From the eastern cities and farmlands every living German was expelled and driven destitute to the destroyed western areas of the country or to the far reaches of Asiatic Russia. The heroism that did not come by acts of will was imposed by a judgment of time and history. Not even little children and the aged were exempt. The unspeakable sufferings of hunger, homelessness and the terror of death from the mysterious spaces of the night sky, were visited on all, and all had to try to live through them in some way. And this period of "saturation bombing" of the great cities of the west, while the great cities of the east (like Breslau and Danzig) were suffering depopulation, was from actual account a period filled with heroism—and filled with the grace that is always waiting for agonized human beings. Some German Christians doubt that their leaders had sufficiently schooled them in the necessity for heroism. They tell us that life, in its depths of horror and loss, was their teacher of heroic endurance and resistance.

### **meaning for us**

Although conditions evoking heroism in Germany do not have an exact parallel in the United States, still they present valuable insight and lessons to us. Many will feel however that deep concern for heroism and protest has little reference to this country where such freedom reigns that man can still act in complete

obedience to the dictates of his conscience. An American priest recently remarked to a German Catholic visitor that the kind of subservient conscience that German Catholics had exhibited to the Nazi state would not have been possible in the United States. Without realizing how smug he sounded, whether in his premise or his conclusion, he explained, "Here in America the lay people are too obedient to their priests and bishops to be misled by a totalitarian state." First of all, it is of the essence of the totalitarian state to silence priests and bishops either by internment or by forbidding their words and counsels to be broadcast. And secondly, it is not through training in methods of unquestioning obedience that the lay people can learn resistance to anything evil—including the totalitarian state. I am excluding from this discussion that other kind of heroism, the heroism of obedience. It is sufficient to point out that such heroism comes as a sequence to a moral choice by men and women who have chosen the religious vow of obedience.

It is only by training lay Catholics for a sense of responsibility and reliance on their own informed consciences that heroism will be possible in difficult situations. Because of the cultural, ethnic and economic circumstances of our history, a state of willing and passive obedience has been the mark of lay Catholics in America in relation to ecclesiastics. I am not referring to the necessary obedience in matters of dogma or with reference to the *magisterium* of the Church. I am referring to the fact that very few lay Catholic groups exist in America which carry out programs designed by responsible Catholics to meet the economic and social problems of our country. In most organizations the lay people carry out directives in whose formulation they had little or no part. The submissive laity is in part a response to a situation unique in the Western world—the existence of a clergy so close to their people, so dedicated, and so active, that they are like a group of officers who can well carry on necessary activities without the aid of their devoted ranks. It is also a response to the historical fact of an amorphous immigrant Catholic population which needed strong guidance in a non-Catholic, and even actively anti-Catholic, atmosphere.

### **What about the future?**

The situation seems to most people to be adequate for the moment. The American government is presently anti-communist and echoes the stand of the Catholic Church against the evils of communist methods and principles. This gives both clergy and laity a sense of strength and well-being for the present and opti-



mism for the future. Is it not entirely possible that the government of the United States may flip-flop once more and come closer to communism, as it did in 1941? The United States government chose the Soviet as an ally after the Soviet's choice of partner, Nazi Germany, had turned on Stalin. Soviet Russia turned on the United States shortly after the peace—otherwise our nation might still be speaking of Russia as the "great economic democracy." In short, American opposition to Soviet communism is in the main tactical, while the opposition of the Catholic Church to communism as a system is based on an unchanging set of moral principles. Tactics may call for a change of governmental policy, at which moment the strong position of the Catholic Church in national life would fade as quickly as it faded in 1941. Should that change occur, there would come a time of crisis for the Church in the United States, a time demanding not a laity trained in submission but a trained lay leadership ready for sacrifice, for heroic acts. Is there any indication of how our lay people would act in such a situation?

The only indications tend to give a very gloomy picture. When in 1941 our government entered a war that made it an ally of an avowedly atheistic and communistic government, there were many who had grave misgivings. While opposed to Hitler and his system as diabolical, they were convinced that the words of the New Testament were unassailably right in that the Devil could not be driven out by means of Beelzebub—that the devil of Hitler could not be exorcized by the devil of Stalin. There were others who opposed the war effort because they felt that the concept of total war was morally unacceptable. Some Americans opposed the means used in World War II even if they considered the aim just. They balked at destroying cities from so great a height that thousands of non-combatants could be slain and buried in the rubble of their homes in a few minutes of clean work by a man who did not have to view the results of his labor. When blockbusters and flame bombs were dropped in great raids over cities, the question was asked whether it was worse to throw innocent people into the flames, as at Dachau, or the flames on to the non-combatants, as at Hamburg.

### **submission versus conscience**

Catholics who asked for guidance on these questions were even told that in time of war the nation decided on the rightness of the ally, the aims of the war and the means of war. It was a simple matter to carry over the habit of unquestioning submission to national leaders. Some Catholics had the habit of submission

so ingrained that they never even questioned the moral content of their actions which they carried out under orders.

As an example of this indifference or blindness to the moral content of specific actions, I cite the case of a brave young airman who participated in twenty-five bombing missions over Germany during the course of the war. During the air-lifts, to save the lives of besieged Berliners, he made numerous flights, carrying not the bombs of death but the bread of life. I asked him to tell me how his reactions differed on the air-lift missions from the bombing missions. He considered, and then said, "Well, on the air-lift missions there was no one to point ack-ack at us. Otherwise it was all the same to us." Even on further questioning, he could not seem to arrive at any qualitative difference in flying a plane to save lives or destroy them. He did not exhibit any human feelings on the matter, though such feelings may have been suppressed in the call to duty.

As loyal citizen-soldiers, carrying out the orders of a legitimate government, American Catholics could co-operate with an atheist communist ally, engage duty in total war, shatter cities that were the shelters of the innocent as well as centers of war industry.

In effect, what was asked of millions of Catholics was that they surrender their conscience to the state. This act of surrender was made with very little protest—heroic or otherwise. The greatest burden of free man, his conscience, was laid down by men supposedly fighting for the free world.

Is there any indication that Catholic Americans would act otherwise in a new crisis? As could be expected, the men who fought in such a war did not bring a free world into being by their participation in mass destruction. It is not an accident that with so many men under arms, and almost limitless destructive power at its disposal, America only helped bring into being a post-war world where more millions are enslaved than at any time in history. The slave empire of our war-time ally now reaches from the heart of Europe to the China Sea. Not since the Mongol Empire has so much territory been united under one tyrant.

As there was little sense of responsibility on the part of Christians in the fact of the creation of this monstrous empire of darkness and slavery, so there is little or no sense of guilt at the spectacle of the world situation.

### **in terror-ridden lands**

At this moment millions of Catholics—moderate, unheroic characters similar to any cross-section of our United States popula-

tion—are called upon by God to endure the pressures and terrors of living in the vast darkness of the lands behind the Iron Curtain. Their families are broken by forced deportation to unknown regions; their priests are jailed, their bishops are publicly tried, calumniated and condemned; they are asked to spy on their neighbors, to carry out the immoral orders of immoral governments. I have met and talked with simple men who refused to carry out such orders—particularly orders involving unjust arrest. "I could not do that to my neighbor because I am a Christian," as a man told me after his flight to the west. Such refusal meant danger, flight and homeless misery.

Countless other Christians are cut off from all contact with the Church and with the Sacraments in the slave kingdom of Siberia. The cold and isolation, the hunger and humiliation of these millions should be constantly before our minds. Among them are not only the victimized Russians, but Poles and Ukrainians, Lithuanians, Latvians and Estonians, Crimean Tartars and Japanese, Germans, Hungarians and Rumanians. God has seen fit to take away from them every human and even sacramental consolation. Perhaps it is only because of the resignation of many of these, their offering up of their utter desolation, that God is staying His scourge from our backs.

Therefore, we must feel ourselves involved in the crisis of the world which affects so many innocent, ordinary human beings. Yet the Catholics of the United States seem loath to admit the existence of the crisis. We have not even defined its terms before our own minds.

### **oblivious of crisis**

Perhaps the measure of the crisis is that we are not aware of its existence, of its totality, of our share in creating it, and of our duty to meet it with new answers and action.

Our Catholic educational system, particularly on the college level, tends to prepare men and women for the good life in America, by conformance in social and economic life. The tensions and insecurities under which so many Americans are breaking are not adequately discussed. Problems and confusions must be aired before clarifications can be arrived at. The total crisis of our own materialistic civilization, in which almost our whole productive machine is mobilized for military purposes, seems to escape the teachers of our young people.

If the crisis were known and felt sufficiently by Catholics, new forms of the lay apostolate would be asserting themselves—apostolates of service to the shelterless, the dispossessed, the exiled



of Europe and the Far East. Groups of young Catholic lay people would move quietly into areas of tensions of a world in travail to bring the balm of love and Christ-like service. The strong, the well-nourished, the sheltered would rush to the side of the weak, the hungry and the shelterless. The refugee-filled cities of our broken world await the loving service of the members of the Church which alone can make all things new. It is an indication of our lack of vision of the total crisis, that from this America, where the Church is strong and equipped, only one or two groups of young lay volunteers have moved out to live and work with the dispossessed. The heroism, of course, is there—it is latent in all youth—but especially in the generous child-like youth of America. The spirit of personal responsibility and of heroism of our young people is in effect being stifled, at a time when no other qualities will meet the needs of this crisis in history. Even if a general war should come, the special irenic vocation of the Christian could be demonstrated. Those to whom modern total war is morally unacceptable could ask for the hardest, most dangerous type of service, especially to the wounded at the front lines.

### **human responsibility**

I have cited the case of surrender of conscience in war time only because the conscript is significant of a deep trend in the dehumanization of modern man—and also because the trend is not generally distinguished or discussed in such terms. Man is less and less responsible for his acts, and so diminishes as a human personality. As war involves morality in ends and means, so one's participation should be a moral choice. Most of the millions of drafted men who participate in violence to root out evil and aggression, live, and meet death, in good faith. But their choice to participate should be a moral one.

The question is particularly pertinent now, when over long periods, there is continuous hot or cold war—or police action involving military operations. If the present system of surrender of judgment and conscience continues, then the conscience of the Christian citizen will play no part in the basic concerns of international life. As Americans, citizens of a great nation committed to global schemes for the saving of a threatened world, we must face the urgency of clarifying for ourselves these essentials.

In this process of clarification we must reach right decisions with the mind of the Church. If these decisions do not conform with the thinking of the majority, we must refuse the easy road of responsible conformism for that of resistance—even heroic resistance.

American Catholicism, in a shining century of sacrifice, achievement, and missionary zeal, has built a religious establishment of churches, schools and welfare centers that is a marvel to the world. In this crisis the whole household of the faith looks to us for its deliverance. Yet today, we American Catholics by conforming and being conformed to the spirit of the world may miss the opportunity to serve as instruments of deliverance of the humiliated enslaved members of the Mystical Body. An evil and irresponsible conformism prevents us from meeting the challenges and opportunities of our day. We must resist this conformism by active protest, even though such protest seems utterly ineffectual and unknown to other Christians.

Whittaker Chambers writes of how deeply he was impressed by the story of a man in a Siberian prison camp who felt he had to protest the floggings of prisoners. This prisoner, helpless and isolated, could only protest by setting himself on fire and dying as a human torch. Now his name and deed have gone round the world.

We are told that we are developing a new fusion type of atom bomb. This horror, if used, would make "miniature suns" of the victimized bodies of human beings as they die and disintegrate. A human torch as an active protest we must not choose. A human sun as a passive victim we must not cause. But we must implore God to give us the grace that will open our blinded eyes, and strengthen our paralyzed wills. Then we can reassert the role of conscience to resist and protest, though we must face, as have those others, loneliness, internment, exile—or even the edge of the blade or the fettered hands.



**AFTER ALL, LET'S NOT OVERDO IT**

**"Sure it's nice to tell the truth,  
But what does it entail?**

**Why, sometimes when you tell the truth,  
You even lose the sale!"**

## BOOK REVIEWS

### The Light of Glory

EDITH STEIN

By Sister Teresia de Spiritu Sancto, O.D.C.

Translated by Cecily Hastings

and Donald Nicholl

Sheed & Ward, \$3.25

*"I have an ever deeper and firmer belief that nothing is merely an accident when seen in the light of God, that my whole life down to its*

*smallest details has been marked out for me in the plan of divine Providence, and has a completely coherent meaning in God's all-seeing eyes. And so I am beginning to rejoice in the light of glory wherein this meaning will be unveiled to me."* This is an extract from the writings of Sister Teresia Benedicta a Cruce (Edith Stein), revealing her great poetic feeling—but one aspect of a woman of heroic spiritual proportions. A warm-hearted and devoted member of a close-knit, highly cultivated, German-Jewish family, Edith Stein was endowed with a passion for knowledge which she exercised in the field of philosophy—a passion so pure and profound that it could not rest until it encountered the living waters of revealed Truth. Daughter of her own times, she became a distinguished disciple of Husserl, and explored his philosophy of phenomenology. From his intellectual paternity she was introduced into the spiritual womb of Saint Teresa of Avila, through whom she was born into the Church. Her talents were soon engaged in the translation of Saint Thomas' *Quaestiones disputatae de Veritate* into German—a work that could only be achieved, Martin Grabmann put it in his preface to the book, by someone who was "at once at home in the world of scholastic thought and understood the language of contemporary philosophy."

In the Carmelite cloister to which her spiritual mother drew her, she took the apostolic injunction "Pray without ceasing" at its deepest level—union with Christ the Divine Head of the Mystical Body in uninterrupted prayer before the Father. Out of her contemplative experiences and the sufferings of her exile came her two books: *Ways of Knowing God* and *Science of the Cross*. Finally the selfless nobility of a life devoted to the pursuit of Truth was crowned by participation in Christ's martyrdom—in a German concentration camp.

This is a good book to read. It is also a good book to talk about, for the reason that the author seems to leave so much unsaid, so that it has a tantalizing quality that at once tantalizes while it sharpens the appetite. And yet it completely fulfills its purpose, for, as the author states in her introduction: "This account of Sister Teresia Benedicta is not meant to be a biography in the proper sense of the word, but is simply a series of collections and testimonials, as faithful and exact as possible. It is offered as a source of information to those who are called to present to their contemporaries a worthy picture of this great woman's life." Certainly there is no dearth of letters, quotations, and other documentary revelations concerning Edith Stein. And in a literary era in which few biographies are free from psychoanalytical probings that burrow into the sub-conscious and strip the soul of every vestige of privacy, I find the modest reticence of Sister Teresia de Spiritu Sancto very wholesome.

ELAINE MALLEY

## A Book of Heroes

**SAINTS FOR NOW**  
Edited by Clare Boothe Luce  
Sheed & Ward, \$3.50

When we consider that all men should aspire to sainthood, we wonder at the fortitude with which most men shun books on those who have succeeded

Perhaps it is the fairytale quality of some past biographers of the saints or the counter effort of universal scoffing that has occasioned such irrational behavior. Thus, when a new omnibus volume, pointed at saints for our time, appears, it is with some trepidation that many will approach it.

Fortunately, ours is a day when the extreme rationalist and semi-idolator are in increasing disfavor. We should, then, in opening up *Saints for Now* expect both reason and respect to be satisfactorily blended in the thumb-nail sketches presented. And on the whole we shall not be disappointed. Mrs. Luce's introductory essay on saints in general especially satisfies with her articulate approach to both sanctity and timeliness.

With twenty stories involved, even general criticism must be made with reservations. Our initial reaction is to the book jacket. Who is being featured, the saints or their biographers? But as we proceed into the volume we find the art and readability of the illustrious group much in evidence. Our inquiries then are disturbed on another score. We ask, "What is the purpose of these selections?" And we wonder anew concerning the purpose of sanctity and of stories of sanctity. Appropriately, we can find an answering cue in Mrs. Luce's introduction when she says: "The portrait of a saint is only a fragment of a great and still uncompleted mosaic—the portrait of Jesus. All the words of a saint are no more than a faint echo of a single phrase of His."

Do the lives of the saints as shown herein help us better to grasp the union we seek with God that was the life of Christ? Many succeed. Marshall's account of the persistent priestliness of Saint John Vianney, Reinhardt's and Merton's expositions of the self-immolation of Saint John of the Cross, and Karl Stern's unemotional analysis of Saint Therese of Lisieux's "way" particularly convey this necessary element.

Others written in a more historical tone enlighten and whet the appetite. Mr. Lewis roasts delightfully the memory of "Good Queen Bess" as he relates the timely attributes of her patient but uncompromising excommunicator, Saint Pius V. Similarly, from an entertaining personal viewpoint, we see Saint Simeon as a symbol for the "no-compromise" standard of Christianity rather than as an anachronistic (in reverse) flagpole sitter. Both the tremendous debt we owe to Saint Benedict and the tremendous ignorance in secular schools of the so-called "Dark Ages" are confirmed by Whittaker Chambers.

There are others, I regret to say, that leave, if not a contrary concept of sanctity, at least a natural, almost worldly portrait that bewilders a Catholic reader. In this vein, the fleshly sins of Saint Augustine receive their due; his gratuitous cruelty is well-noted yet only a few later paragraphs refer to his mystic attainments.

Saint Radegund, obscure no doubt to most, while introduced as a saintly dame in a rapacious age, is remembered most for her friend and



biographer. This confrere, Fortunatus, a saint, the author avers, is portrayed as both a glutton and wine bibber. We sense a sneer, however, on being told that the honors of sanctity were easily won in the sixth century.

Many of these essays emphasize too much the animal, emotional sides of the saints to the injury, or at best, the neglect of the spiritual. Thus analyses are made of motivations and visions in purely pseudo-psychological terms. There is the implication that mystical experiences are to be suspect if they cannot find their counterpart in the purely natural atmosphere. It would appear that some of the authors desired to exhibit a warmth toward the saints without succumbing to all the supernatural manifestations which the tradition of the Church has attributed to them.

The illustrations are at least arresting. They are diversified to please a variety of moods but some will satisfy but a few of the more developed tastes.

HUGH SHORT

## SO YOU DON'T LIKE BOOK CLUBS



## THE THOMAS MORE BOOK CLUB

### *offers you*

Twenty-five to 30 per cent discounts AT ONCE on every book you select instead of a "free" dividend book after you've purchased a certain number.

Books for mental and spiritual growth—to suite the taste of every discriminating reader. A Newsletter each month without charge describing IN ADVANCE the forthcoming selections so you can decide whether or not you want them. There is no membership fee. The only requirement is that you purchase four Club selections each year—at the special discounts.

**Special Offer!** A one year subscription to the modern book review magazine **BOOKS ON TRIAL** at a reduction of \$2.00—you pay only \$1.00 instead of \$3.00, the regular subscription price.

### *recent selections*

**SAINTS FOR NOW**, Clare Boothe Luce  
**YESTERDAY, TODAY AND FOREVER**, Maria Augusta Trapp  
**CATHOLICISM AND AMERICAN FREEDOM**, James M. O'Neill  
**LIVING THE MASS**, F. Desplanques, S.J.  
**ONE SKY TO SHARE**, Raymond Leopold Bruckberger, O.P.  
**MAN AND THE STATE**, Jacques Maritain

**THOMAS MORE BOOK CLUB**, 210 West Madison St., Chicago 6, Ill.

☐ Please enroll me in the Thomas More Book Club. I agree to purchase a minimum of four Club selections each year at the special discounts. Send me **BOOKS ON TRIAL** for only \$1.00 (a saving of \$2.00).

☐ Please send me complete information about the Book Club.

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

CITY ..... ZONE ..... STATE ..... Ill-N

## BOOK NOTES

*The Halo and the Sword* by Mary Purcell (Newman, \$3.50) is an enjoyable, vivid account of Saint Joan of Arc. The author, stressing the spiritual rather than the political aspects of Joan's mission, gives us an interesting biography that is beautifully written but that does not enlighten the reader as to the true meaning of Joan's vocation and its influence on her contemporaries. Many pieces are missing to make this a complete narrative of the saint's life but it serves as a series of well-chosen impressions.—C.J.G.

*The Hell Catholic* (Sheed & Ward, \$2.00) is a sensational title for an hour and a half of not particularly interesting reading. It is a story of a supposed Holy Year Pilgrimage into which is forced and jammed incidents that lead to academic explanations of the teachings of the Church. The characters are not drawn well enough to give them life and the main character changes so quickly and so often that he also lacks reality. The changes in tense from present to past betray the author's lapses. The sensational title and the author's continued anonymity are the publisher's only selling points. This book, some may say, seems to be a good reason why the author uses the name Father X.—Father Y.

---

STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION required by the Act of Congress of August 24, 1912, as amended by the Acts of March 3, 1933, and July 2, 1946 (Title 39, United States Code, Section 233) of INTEGRITY published monthly at New York, N. Y. for October 1, 1952.

1. The names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are: Publisher: Integrity Publishing Co., Inc., 157 East 38th Street, New York 16, N. Y.; Editor: Dorothy Dohen, 157 East 38th Street, New York 16, N. Y.; Managing editor: None; Business manager: None.

2. The owner is: (If owned by a corporation, its name and address must be stated and also immediately thereunder the names and addresses of stockholders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, the names and addresses of the individual owners must be given. If owned by a partnership or other unincorporated firm, its name and address, as well as that of each individual member must be given.) Integrity Publishing Co., Inc., Dorothy Dohen, Doreen O'Sullivan, all of 157 East 38th Street, New York 16, New York.

3. The known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: (If there are none, so state.) None.

4. Paragraphs 2 and 3 include, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting; also the statements in the two paragraphs show the affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner.

DOROTHY DOHEN

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 1st day of October, 1952. Marie R. Barr—  
(My commission expires 9/11/53).



# *The Month of the Holy Souls*

seems to us obscurely suitable for a glance back at wonderful books that usually rest in peace, undisturbed by advertising, but always moving quietly out of bookstores into book cases.

How many of these have you read?

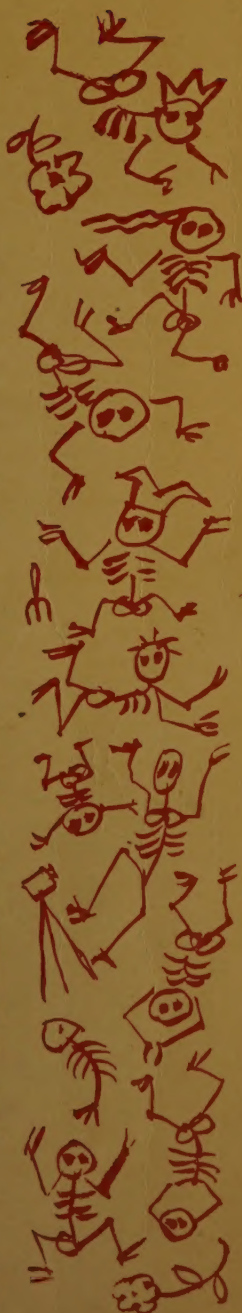
ather Alfred Wilson's **PARDON AND PEACE** (\$2.75) published in 1947, still the most complete and satisfactory book on the Sacrament of Penance. Chesterton's **ST. THOMAS AQUINAS** (\$3.00). (You must know by now what Gilson and Maritain said about this.) F. J. Sheed's **A MAP OF LIFE** (\$2.00), a great help to people who get stuck on the threshold of the Church, and its large young brother, **THEOLOGY AND SANITY** (\$3.00), which makes you really think about the faith and like it. The book of Gerald Vann's we still like best ourselves is **THE DIVINE PITY** (\$2.75) written to show that God wants us to be happy in this world as well as the next. **WHAT BECOMES OF THE DEAD** (\$3.50) by Dr. C. S. Lewis, first published 25 years ago, but if you want information on the next world, this is the book to read—and this is the month to read it. Maisie Ward's **THE SPLENDOR OF THE ROSARY** (\$2.50) was published years before the Family Rosary drive, if it had been published this Fall, what fun we could have had! If you ever feel that the rosary is either much too easy or far too difficult, you will find this book a real help. You must have seen and have probably read **SAINTS FOR NOW** edited by Clare Boothe Luce (\$3.50), a new book in more ways than one. If it increased your appetite for saints and if you would like to know one saint really well, read **THE COLLECTED LETTERS OF ST. THERESE** translated by F. J. Sheed (\$3.75) and the biography of the same saint by John Beevers, **STORM OF GLORY** (\$3.00). Both contain much that the saint left out of her own autobiography, and one can see why. If you have looked through this ad and seen only books you have read, then we have been wasting your time, haven't we? But have you?

## ORDER FROM A BOOKSTORE

The next TRUMPET will be out round about the time you see this. The MacGill is delighted to send it to you, free and postpaid, but we won't know if you change your address unless you tell her.

NEED & WARD

NEW YORK 3





The little Christ-child comes again in the poverty of the stable, yet paradoxically He possesses all the wealth in the world. Born to die a failure, yet He is a success. From His birth, victim and sufferer, yet He gives us the example of a life of perfect joy. In Christ is the answer to all our desires.

In the year to come INTEGRITY will try to show how this is so, how He is indeed the answer to the problems arising in all areas of modern life. We shall have issues on Town and Country, the Church and Church Unity, Education, Woman, Vocations of Service, the Spirit of the Times, Birth, and Catholic Action.

Give your friends INTEGRITY for Christmas. We'll start their subscription with our special Christmas number on Contemplation.

Integrity, 157 East 38th Street, New York 16, N. Y.

Please send INTEGRITY to the following. Enclosed is \_\_\_\_\_ Bill me \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Zone \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Please send a gift card. New ☐ Renewal ☐

My Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Zone \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

(Annual Subscriptions: Domestic \$3. Canadian \$3.50, Foreign \$4.)